

**City of Wichita  
District Advisory Board Meeting, District 4  
March 6, 2023**

**TO:** City Council Members  
District Advisory Board Members

**SUBJECT:** City of Wichita Fireworks Ordinance

**INITIATED BY:** Wichita Fire Department

**AGENDA:** New Business

---

**Recommendation:** Spread word district-wide and provide feedback regarding proposed modifications to the City of Wichita fireworks ordinance.

**Background:** In November of 2022, a fireworks committee was assembled to review historical challenges related to fireworks and explore possible solutions. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Wichita Fire Department presented a two-phased approach to the Wichita City Council outlining legalization of consumer aerial fireworks. Considerations included sales, possession, and display within the city.

**Analysis:** The Fireworks Committee consulted with external stakeholders throughout the process of considering fireworks ordinance modifications. Fireworks vendors attended the January 9th committee meeting, representing both small- and large-scale operations. City staff and vendors identified safety as the top priority and offered a variety of solutions to ensure that changes to the current ordinance do not degrade the overall health or wellbeing of the community. Suggestions included increased literature at fireworks stands, offering safe disposal containers at time of sale, and improving cooperation with dispatch to document and monitor geographical locations with a significant number of fireworks permits, should aerial fireworks be allowed in the future.

Upon agreement that ordinance modifications are indicated, the Fireworks Committee lent strong consideration to viewpoints of citizens that are not supportive of Independence Day fireworks. Annually, The WFD receives a variety of citizen complaints and calls for service throughout the days leading up to July 4th. The most common complaints include stress caused to pets, PTSD triggering, and fireworks usage after legal shooting hours. Committee members retained a strategy of modifying the ordinance in a manner that helps to alleviate concerns while mirroring Sedgwick County and State of Kansas statute. Specifically, WPD and WFD staff indicated significant confidence that personnel will be far more likely to strictly enforce the new ordinance, due to an expectation that citizens will be afforded the opportunity to shoot aerial fireworks legally and confusion between state, county and local statutes will be eliminated. The committee also considered increasing associated fines to discourage the illegal discharge of fireworks after midnight.

After careful consideration of multiple factors, the committee agreed that local fireworks ordinance should more closely mirror state and Sedgwick County mandates. A two-phased approach is suggested to avoid the pitfalls of implementing significant changes in a relatively short period of time. Phase 1, to be implemented in 2023, will address the use and possession of aerial fireworks in city limits. In 2024, phase 2 will address the sale of aerial fireworks in Wichita.

**Financial Considerations:** There is no impact on the General Fund.

**Legal Considerations:** Comments provided by DAB members, citizens, and various community groups will be used to identify community needs and refine final recommendations consistent with community feedback.

**Recommendations/Actions:** It is recommended that the District Advisory Board provide comment and help spread the word about prospective modifications to the City of Wichita fireworks ordinance.

**Attachment:** Fireworks executive summary & presentation.